1;Gabb N-5 (1873-1874) 1876
SA19 Talamanca SA19

savage Indians do not possess it. The drum is their greatest favorite. 534
It is from twenty inches to two feet long, cylindrical for half its length, with a diameter of six or seven inches; it then tapers convexly to near the other end and then widens out a little. The pattern is always the same, and the size varies but a few inches. The larger end is tightly covered with the skin from the belly of the iguana lizard. It is glued on by fresh blood, being held in place with string until dry. A cord tied around each end suspends it loosely from the left shoulder, and it is held under the left arm, being beaten with the tips of the fingers of the right hand. It is used principally to accompany and keep time to singing and is an indispensable part of every feast or gathering of whatever kind. To accompany the invigorating music of the drum and help the din, an armadillo skin is sometimes used. This is scraped over the rings with a large hard bean-like seed. It at least helps to add to the noise, if it does not contribute melody. A little flute, about as musical as a penny whistle, is sometimes added to the concert, though it seems rather to be looked upon as a toy. These flutes are made of a bone of some bird, perhaps a pelican. The bone has half-a-dozen holes drilled in it, and the [321]
end is plugged with wax, so as to direct the air to the larger aperture near the end. I bought one from a Tiribi made of a deer's bone. The priests use in their songs a rattle, made of a small pear-shaped tree calabash, lashed to a bone at the small end. This contains a few seeds of the "shot plant," or Cauna. It is held upright and solemnly shaken in time with the song until the end of the stanza, when, as a signal for the chorus to strike in, it is given a dexterous twirl, throwing the seeds rapidly around inside. On very solemn occasions a curious box is also used. It is about eight inches long by four square on the end. It is carved out hollow, with a long tongue on one face, isolated by a U-shaped slit. A heavy handle is attached to one end, also carved out of the same block. When used, it is simply struck on the above-mentioned tongue with a bone or piece of hard stick. This is only used on the death of a chief. There is but one in the tribe, and no bribe that I could offer sufficed to buy it.

Fashions in dress change even among savages, at least as civilization 291
approaches. Formerly the dress of the men consisted only of a breech-cloth. It was made of *mastate*, or bark cloth, about a foot wide and seven or eight feet long, tapering at one end. The cloth is made by taking the 287
inner bark of either the India rubber or another tree and beating it with a roughened stick over a log. This loosens the fibre, and renders it soft and flexible. It is then carefully washed until all the gummy matter is washed out. After drying, it is rubbed a little and becomes soft and smooth to the feel. To apply the breech-cloth, the wide end is held 291
against the belly, the remainder being passed between the legs; it is then wound around the waist and the point tucked in; the broad end then falls over in front, for about a foot long, like an apron. When cotton cloth is used, it is simply caught up in front and behind under a cotton belt, with a similar apron in front. Sometimes, for warmth, a shirt of

2:Skinner E-5 (1917) 1920
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri

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made usually in two sizes, only both of which are more capacious than ours. A large example in the collection of the Museum is made in coarse diagonal net, the strands passing over two and under two.

Especially in such houses as are provided with raised floors, one finds beds in addition to hammocks, the groundwork of which is usually a coarse, plain blanket made of a heavy bark cloth, or tapa, about a yard square.

[287]

Bags.—In abundant evidence in every house are the carrying bags, in varying sizes, consisting of coiled work without foundation, and manufactured of cotton or sisal fiber. These bags are made with bone needles, fashioned somewhat like the bone netting-needles of the Central Algonkians, and are, as Gabb says, "meshed like our fiber nets." The bags are sometimes double, one being netted within another, and are often ornamented with a few encircling, parallel bands in black or red, or both, colored with native bark dyes. The bags are called *chákara*. All are furnished with a head- or breast-strap, woven of one piece with the bag.

[412]

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2:Skinner E-5 (1917) 1920
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri

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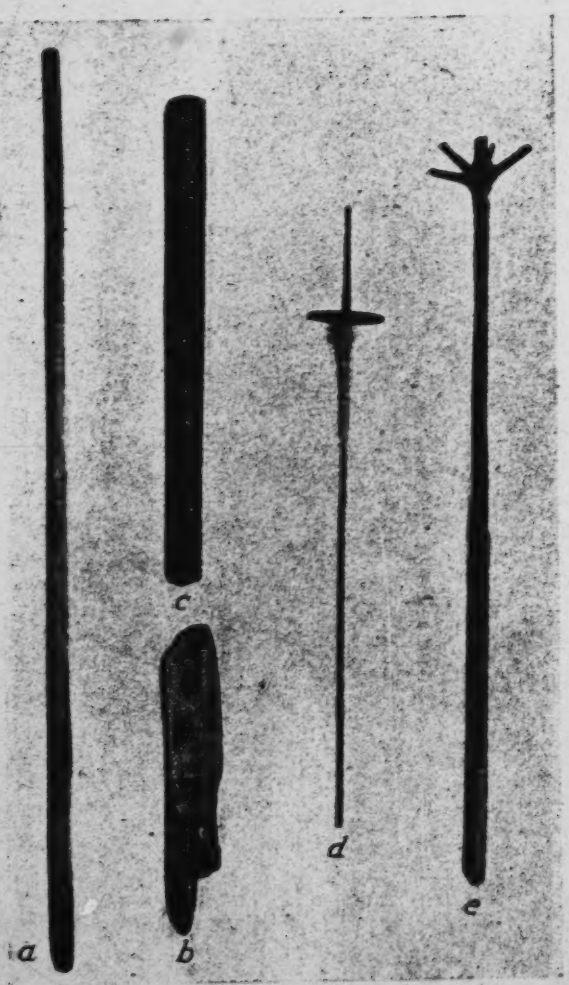

VARIOUS IMPLEMENTS

a, Fire-drill; *b*, Hearth; *c*, Bark-beater; *d*, Spindle; *e*, Cacao stirring stick. (Length of *e*, 26 inches)

[facing p. 72]

2:Skinner E-5 (1917) 1920
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri

Bark and Fiber Articles.—Besides the blankets of beaten bark used for beds and as wrappings for the bones of the dead, the Bribri have burden straps of the same material. These are merely plain bands of tapa. The Indians say the bark is stripped from the trees in sheets, then pounded on a log with a wooden bark-beater. 287

Twisted fiber string and ropes, from several native substances, including agave, are made in varying degrees of fineness. These are used for every purpose, from bag and hammock weaving to tying house-posts and fastening drum-heads, and as cord for their suspension. 283

Weapons.—Besides the digging-stick war-clubs above described, the Bribri declare that in their former wars they used lances, those remembered being about six feet long, of hardwood tipped with iron. Gabb reports obtaining one of these, and also a small, round shield of tapir hide—another obsolete article. 411

Pl. XVII, *d*, represents a bow, 4 ft. 10 in. in length, and, as usual, furnished with a fiber string. The arrows are compound, having a reed shaft and a hardwood fore-

286 [462] **Bags.** Bags (fig. 8, *b–3*) are woven only by the men. They are made by cutting strips of *majagua*, *pita*, or whatever material is used, very, very thin. This is then twisted into a fine cord. The bag is started from a circle of this cord. The end is passed through this, and a knot is made, leaving a loop. Once the circle has been started, the whole is put on the ground, and the maker puts his heel on top of the center. Two knots are made, one on each side of a loop, each time the cord is passed through a loop. When the work is large enough to be managed more easily, it is taken off the ground and held between the knees. Some bags are made with only one knot at each intersection. Bags are used for carrying [415] the gourd water bottle, for keeping materials, and for carrying or keeping odds and ends.

Hammocks. The *Boruca* men make a hammock, from *majagua* (see fig. 8, *b–6*). The weave is coarser than the hammocks made by the *Bribri* from the same material. In hammock-making, the strips are twisted tightly and fastened around a stick which is placed horizontally at each end. The weaving is done with the fingers. Each time the strip is woven in and out of the spaces left by the original strips and then looped over the sticks at the end. When the hammock is finished, a turkey or chicken thigh bone is usually substituted for the sticks, and acts as a link between the hammock and the rope which ties the hammock to the wall.

285 295 **Hats.** One or two Indian men occasionally make straw hats from the leaf of the *sem-krá* (see p. 7). The leaf is first dried in the sun, then cut into thin strips, and the hat is woven basket-fashion, commencing from the center of the crown. This whole technique is not common to the *Boruca* and is probably borrowed from the Chiriquíanos who are found scattered through much of southeastern Costa [439] Rica. The hats are made to sell in *ladino* towns, and are seldom used by the *Boruca*.

287 **Bark Cloth.** Today, the *Boruca* do not profess to use bark cloth or *mastate* (fig. 7, *c – 4*) as part of their dress, nor do they use it any longer for sails (see p. 15). Occasionally, bark cloth is used as a blanket for sleeping. The *Boruca* claim to have worn *mastate* as late as 1933, when they had easy access to the coast

287 and the *mastate blanco* tree which grows there. In view of the fact that it is frequently acquired from the neighboring *Cavagra* or *Cabécares* (see p. 24), it is quite probable that the *mastate* is used, not only in place of blankets, but also as loin cloth by the women. *Mastate* can be made from two trees. One tree is the *mastate blanco*, or white *mastate*, which the *Boruca* prefer, and which, as we have seen, grows on the coast. The other tree is found in the interior, and is known as *mastate colorado*, or red *mastate* (*Brosimum utila* [HBK] Pittier). It is the tree still used by the *Cavagra* for making bark cloth, but apparently was not utilized by the *Boruca* unless it was absolutely necessary. Both trees have a milk, but [272] that of the red *mastate* is sometimes used for drinking, while that of the white is never taken. To make the cloth, a piece of bark is cut off and rolled at right angles to the grain, then beaten with a wooden stick to take off the rough outer surface, after which it is beaten with another club whose surface is grooved. It is then soaked in water and pulled to the desired size and put in the sun to dry, having pieces of wood or stone placed on the outer edges to keep the cloth from contracting.

321 **Bone Objects.** The use of bone amongst the *Boruca* is rather curious. It is the material employed almost generally for spindle whorls, and always for the needle-like pieces which are the temple, and are used to pin the woven cloth already on the loom so that it does not lose its shape while the rest is being made. Furthermore, the thigh bones of wild turkey and fowl are used to connect the hammock with the extra rope from which it hangs. Similar bones serve as handles for the *maracas* (see [755] fig. 10, *c*, *d*). Bone is also used for certain cures, for example, if a baby has dysentery, bone and garlic bracelets are put on its wrists.

415 [824] **Gourds.** One of the most important everyday artifacts of the *Boruca* is the gourd which grows on the tree called either *guacal*, or *jícara*, depending on the shape of the fruit. This tree scientifically is known as *Crescentia Cujete* L., and the tree, as well as its fruit, in English, are all called "gourds." The *guacal* is round, while *jícaras* are oblong.

The gourds serve many purposes. They are, of course, used as drinking cups, for hold-

3:Stone E-5 (1945) 1949

SA19 Talamanca SA19
Boruca

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4. Old and Indian women laden with grasses for a roof. A. Artifacts of the Bayano: 1, mask or skirt; 2, baby; 3, doll; 4, necklace or pendant; 5, mask; 6, face-tipped mask; 7, man's belt; 8, sieve. B. Artifacts of the Bayano: 1, face-tipped mask with head and tail; 2, basket; 3, sieve; 4, bark cloth; 5, drum. C. Woman wearing the mask, or skirt, and blouse.

[p.57]

[P. 19 (A)] SA19 Talamanca SA19 Bribri Cabecar

352 177 [354] [415] [412] 417 342 177 [192] nearer to non-Indian habitations, intrusions of other customs are evident. The hearth is sometimes raised and hanging shelves contain gourds, palm-leaf dishes sewn at the ends with vines similar to those of the Panamanian Guaymí, and often one or two knives, forks, plates, cups, etc. A pole with cut-in or notched steps is used for a ladder to reach the mezzanines which are occasionally seen in this type of house. It is significant that the Cabécares, who have had less contact with non-indigenous neighbors in the past, have no word for this ladder or mezzanine.

354 [824] [192] [184] In the houses nearer to the Talamanca Plain and in the part of Chirripó near Moravia, an oil lamp is occasionally seen hanging by *pita* (agave thread). There is no word for lamp in either Bribri or Cabécar, but in Talamanca, the word for fire is used.

On the Pacific side of the range, at Salitre,

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 19(B)--ANALYST]

DRESS AND ADORNMENT

291 [287] Dress. Dress does not ever appear to have formed an important part of Talamanca culture. From the middle of the 17th century to the present, we can trace the use of bark cloth. In this respect, the following commentaries are of interest:

> (the Cabécares) . . . for working and in their houses dress in tree bark called in these lands Mastate, and only to go to mass or when in the presence of the priest do they dress in cotton.[78]
>
> The dresses of the Urinamas, Cavécares, and Talamancas are short jackets, so narrow that they expose all the chest, (made) of tree bark which the Spaniards call *mastate*, and a sash of the same about six fingers wide and a yard and a half long, with which they cover their private parts; the women go about with a skirt of the same and some (are) of cotton which they tie (reaching) from the waist to the knees. . . .[79]

[TEXT CONTINUES BOTTOM OF P. 19(B)--ANALYST]

[78] Fernández, 1907, vol. IX, p. 501. ". . . y es de advertir que para sus trabajos y vivir en sus casas se visten de Cáscaras de palo llamado en estas tierras Mastate, y sólo para ir á Misa ó ponerse en la presencia del Padre se visten de algodón."

[79] Fernández, 1886, vol. V, p. 373. "Los vestidos de Urinamas, Cavécares y Talamancas son unas almillas cortas y tan angostas que descubren todo el pecho, de corteza de árbol que llaman los españoles *mastate*, y una banda de lo mismo como de seis dedos de ancha

Ujarrás, and China Kichá, the hearth is more often constructed of clay on a wooden table. Here wooden beds and mezzanines made of wooden rods are used for sleeping along with hammocks. Plates, spoons, cups, etc., are seen in every household although their number is limited according to the family purse. The low stool is always present but a chair and a table are found now and then. Hanging shelves serve for storing food and all manner of odds and ends. Yeast for chicha, generally wrapped in *bijagua* leaves, is hung on the wall posts. The fondness for decorating the wall with feathers, eggshells, bones, and skins, however, remains the same as on the Caribbean side. Attached to the exterior of the house are hen's nests made of vine baskets or *havas*, a wild plant or orchid, and generally a piece of tree trunk containing wild bees.

DRESS AND ADORNMENT

An early report concerning the expedition of Fray Margil to the Province of Talamanca states:

> Their dress is very poor, because the men (are dressed) with their cloth of skins, and the women with their short cloths, and those who do not have them, with plantain leaves appear as contented as the best dressed Spaniards.[80]

Today, bark cloth (*see* Manufactures and Trade), still called *mastate* in Spanish, is used in upper Talamanca and upper Chirripó as shirts or Mother Hubbards, as loin cloths, and as bed covering. In the rest of the area inhabited by the Talamancas, it is only used as blankets. Sewing is done by both men and women but chiefly by the men.

The ordinary woman's garment consists of

y vara y medio de largo, con que cubren las partes de honestidad; las mujeres andan con una manta de lo mismo y algunas de algodón que la atan desde la cintura a las rodillas. . . ."

[80] De Espinosa, 1742, p. 64. "Su vestir es pobrisimo, porq los hombres con sus cendales de pieles, y las mujeres con sus pañalitos cortos, y las que no los tienen, con hojas de platanos se hallan tan contentos como los mas bien vestidos Españoles."

283 824 sp.) is used on the Pacific slope for tumplines and rope.

287 [462] [824] **Bark Cloth.** Men generally make bark cloth as it requires considerable strength. There are three kinds of *mastate* or bark cloth made in Talamanca and two on the Pacific side. Red *mastate* (*Brosimum costaricensis* Liebmann) and white *mastate* (*Brosimum* sp.) are used on both slopes. The third kind is *Poulsenia armata* (Miq.) Standl; Moraceae. The method of preparation is similar.

The bark of the first two trees is cut and rolled at a right angle to the grain. The outer surface is removed by beating with a stick and then with a wooden club cut with horizontal grooves, one side of which is usually slightly curved. It is soaked in water, pulled to the shape and size desired, and left in the sun to dry. Stones are placed at the corners to hold the shape. The cloth is used for blankets, [519] hammocks (amongst the Cabécar only), to carry babies, as tumplines, belts, and loincloths, and as an article of trade with the [438] Borucas.

The third type, *testi* in Cabécar, is prepared by cutting around the tree with a machete the desired size for the cloth. Then a wedge-shaped wooden stick is used to peel it off the trunk. The piece is then doubled and the outer bark is cut in a thin sheet and rolled back, leaving the cambium or inner bark. This is soaked for several days and is afterwards beaten with a wooden stick to make it pliable and soft. It is used primarily for blankets.

[824] [415] In Talamanca and in Chirripó, the wild rubber tree (*Castilla* sp.) also furnishes a cloth for hunting pouches.

286 415 **Net Bags.** The Bribri have long been famous for the manufacture of net bags (*see* Trade), although the Cabécares are known to make them occasionally. They serve a variety of purposes besides being a depository for personal and household things. They are used for hunting and for carrying all manner of cargo, from plantains to babies. Most bags are made of *pita* or *cabuya* thread and have a long handle which also acts as a tumpline. The usual shape [224] is baglike, but those for blow-gun hunting are elongated and have small divisions or pockets. [227] At times in Talamanca, casting nets are made from the same material and in the same technique.

[P. 24(B)] SA19 Talamanca SA19 Bribri Cabecar

381 **Glues.** *See* Musical Instruments and Hunting.

281 **Skins.** There is relatively little use of cattle hide among these people. The Cabécares of the [231] Pacific slope who have most of the cattle, and [415] rarely the Bribri and Cabécares of Talamanca, make pouches or hunting bags from the sacs of bulls. The Pacific Cabécares also copy their non-indigenous neighbors in using skins to dry rice, beans, and cacao. Both wild pig and jaguar hide are made into pouches. Pieces of [824] deer hide are used for minute bags which [777] contain good luck seeds to put on children's necklaces. In upper Talamanca men (chiefly [292] medicine men) wear deer and jaguar skins over [534] their clothing on festive occasions. Peccary hide is used to cover drums on the Pacific slope and iguana skin is used on the Caribbean side.

314 **Rubber.** On the Caribbean slope, rubber is 824 tapped from the wild tree (*Castilla fallax* O. F. Cook) by the Cabécares and made into pouches (*see* Hunting).

322 **Wood and Stone.** Wood, of course, has a variety of uses many of which have been mentioned earlier. Among the Bribri of the [252] Caribbean littoral, grinding tables are often made of wood and are large enough for several women to use at the same time. They are located beside a water hole or stream and are balanced on logs. On the Caribbean side, [415] mahogany or cedar mixing trays or troughs, [273] up to twelve feet in length and supported by four feet, are used for chicha mash (*see* Furnishings). Vertical wooden mortars for rice, [412] shallow mortars, and large trays or bowls are [415] common. These last two items are used for [251] drying foodstuffs or even for mixing paste [252] with water. Wooden staffs known as *cacique* sticks are an important part of the medicine man's equipment (*see* Special Paraphernalia and Significance).

372 In upper Talamanca, the fire stick is used (*see* Fire-making).

324 Stone is not worked today but is employed for food preparation and the manufacture of ● 287 bark cloth.